

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-36 are pending in this application. Claims 1, 9, 19, 21, 25, and 26 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by U.S. patent 5,905,852 to Love et al. (herein "Love"). Claims 2-8, 10-18, 20, 22-24, and 27-36 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Love in view of U.S. patent 5,802,260 to Shimakawa et al. (herein "Shimakawa").

Addressing the above-noted rejections, those rejections are traversed by the present response.

Applicants respectfully submit the claims clearly distinguish over Love, and further in view of Shimakawa.

Love discloses a configuration in which a print data output device 12, such as a computer, can be connected to a primary printer 14, and the primary printer 14 is in turn connected to an alternative printer 16. In Love when received print data is not suitable to be printed by the primary printer 14, the primary printer 14 converts the data into a format compatible with the alternate printer 16, and transfers the converted data to the alternate printer 16 to be printed by the alternate printer 16.<sup>1</sup> The claims are believed to be clearly directed to a different structure and device than as in Love.

First, in the claimed invention an information processing apparatus can send each of the print jobs to a buffer included in any of the plurality of printing apparatuses of the system. As shown for example in Figure 1 in the present specification, print jobs can be sent to any of the printers 50-70. That is not the case in Love. In Love a print job can only be sent to a single printer 14 from the information processing apparatus 12. In Love only the printer 14

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<sup>1</sup> See for example Love in Figure 2 and the Abstract.

can then further send a print job to the alternative printer 16. The claims have a different structure and operation.

Moreover, in the claimed printing system the source apparatus specification unit can also specify a source printing apparatus “in a preset range of printing apparatuses”, and the job transfer unit transfers a print job to another printing apparatus “in the preset range of printing apparatuses”. Love also does not disclose that feature. Love, in contrast to the claimed features, previously specifies only a single alternative printer. In Love a print job cannot be sent to plural printing apparatuses but only to a single alternative printer 16, and again that print job is sent from the primary printer 14.

That is, the print data output device 12 in Love cannot designate a preset range of printing apparatuses, but can only designate a single print apparatus. The print data output device 12 in Love can only designate the primary print apparatus 12. Thus, Love clearly does not disclose or suggest “a source apparatus specification that specifies a source printing apparatus ... in a preset range of printing apparatuses”. The print data output device 12 in Love as noted above cannot even select the alternate printer mechanism 16 but can only select the primary printer 14.

Further, the job transfer unit in the claimed invention transfers the data to “another printing apparatus in the preset range of printing apparatuses”. That is, the job transfer unit can only transfer data to another printer that was previously selected in a range by the source apparatus. As noted above, the print data output device 12 in Love does not at all select the alternate printer 16, and thus the controller 24 in the primary printer 14 in Love does not transfer data to another printer that was already in the “preset range of preset apparatus”.

Moreover, in the printing system of claim 1, the source printing apparatus and the printing apparatus that receives the transfer job can be varied within the preset range of printing apparatuses. That is, in the claims there is no distinction made between the different

printing apparatuses to which print jobs can be set, in contrast to Love in which the printer 14 is always the primary printer and the printer 16 is always the alternate printer.

The claimed invention can also realize different benefits than as in Love. The claimed invention can improve an overall printing efficiency when multiple printers are connected on a network. That results because in the claimed invention print jobs will be distributed to the multiple printers arbitrarily, and any other printer can be used to transfer print jobs to an arbitrary preset range of printing apparatuses. Love cannot achieve such a benefit. Love can only improve the printing efficiency of a printer job sent to the primary printer 14 by transferring a print job from that primary printer 14 to the alternative printer 16. Love cannot improve the efficiency of a network of printers, and particularly cannot even improve the efficiency of both the primary printer 14 and the alternate printer 16.

In such ways, the claims as currently written are believed to clearly distinguish over Love.

Moreover, applicants submit no teachings in Shimakawa cure the deficiencies in Love. In fact, the teachings in Shimakawa are not believed to even address the deficiencies of Love with respect to the further noted dependent claims.

Shimakawa notifies a client of an environment of a target printer (whether or not any problem arises) and the status of the print spooler. In the system of Shimakawa the user monitoring the client information learns that his/her printing job is in a long waiting queue and the user can find another printer having a vacant spool, and the user can then issue a continued print command including the name of the alternate printer.

In other words, the system of Shimakawa requires the user to input the continued print command indicating the name of the alternative printer. Therefore, even if such teachings in Shimakawa were combined with the teachings of Love, when the user input the continued print command indicating the name of the alternate printer, the target print command would

only be transferred to the alternate printer. Such an operation would still differ from the claims in which the job transfer unit itself can automatically transfer a printer job to another printer.

Moreover, Love discloses at column 7, lines 6-13 that a data transfer can be accomplished automatically when it is determined that signals received by the primary printer 12 are not compatible with characteristics of the print engine 26 of the primary printer 14. The system of Love is not designed to automatically determine an alternate printer but can only send information to a single predesignated alternate printer 16.


As Love provides no disclosure or suggestion of a system that could change or select an alternate printer, the combination of teachings of Love and Shimakawa would at most result in transferring a target print job to an alternate printer by allowing a *user input* to command that transfer. Such a combination of teachings still would not meet the claimed features for the reasons discussed above.

In view of these foregoing comments, the claims as currently written are believed to clearly distinguish over the applied art.

As no other issues are pending in this application, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is now in condition for allowance, and it is hereby respectfully requested that this can be passed to issue.

Respectfully submitted,

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